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Milan High students 'respond' to the need

By Kym Boelter-Muckler
, Staff Writer Milan News

A freak accident in the classroom has left a high school student with a broken knuckle and worse yet, tissue has been stripped away exposing bone on one of his fingers. He's bleeding profusely and very frightened.

At Milan High School the reaction to this emergency is calmly addressed by nearby classmates, who snap into action.

Aware of the dangers of shock, Jessica Chapin, a senior, keeps the student calm by talking to him and offering reassurance.

Nathan Kaczmarek, also a senior, locates the school resource police officer and an ambulance is called to the scene.

Twelfth-grader Miles Cooper waits at the front of the school to direct the EMTs to the closest entrance, which will expedite the care to the injured student.

Once the EMTs arrive, Nathan collects information from witnesses of the accident and makes a brief report of what happened. Miles collects the hurt student's books and supplies so they're not lost in the shuffle.

Jessica, Miles and Nathan relied on their training and responded when confronted with a classroom emergency.

Responding in an emergency situation was what they were trained to do, thanks to a program piloted in the Milan Area School District known as Teen School Emergency Response Training, according to Milan High School Assistant Principal Leanna Soltis.

THE RESPONSE and achievements made by the group of teens at Milan is being credited for a Department of Homeland Security Grant award of \$968,632 to fund similar programs in other school districts across the state.

"This grant award was a direct result of our pilot program at Milan High School," said Eastern Michigan University professor, Skip Lawver, who along with Leanna Soltis and Michigan Citizens Corps Director Gary Zulinski first brought the concept of teaching students to be first responders in emergencies to the Milan Area School Board.

Lawver first thought of the idea while at a National Homeland Security Conference that discussed a similar program for adults known as Citizen Corps. Citizen Corps is a grassroots movement that promotes safe and secure communities through educating as many people as possible on disaster preparedness.

"I thought to myself, what if they had something like this in the schools, with a group of students learning how to respond in a situation," Lawver said. "It could be amazing. So the first person I thought to call was Leanna Soltis at Milan."

Soltis took law enforcement classes at EMU from Lawver, who was her professor at the time. "Just imagine if every school in the nation had something like this—just how much safer that would make our schools. What these kids are capable of is amazing," Soltis said.

ONCE A PROGRAM for teens was designed, based on the Michigan Citizen Corps program; Soltis began inviting students to participate.

"At first my parents were against it. They were worried about me possibly being in the center of a

dangerous situation. But after they learned more about it, they became very supportive," explained Jessica Chapin.

For Samantha Nickel, who graduated last year, the program had a profound effect on her life.

"Before I joined Teen SERT, I was in the cosmetology program," Nickel said. "But the experience I gained here, made me realize what I really want to be is a nurse." Currently, Samantha Nickel works as a state certified nursing assistant.

Teen SERT impressed two of its participants so much that it was the subject they chose to write about in the essay section of the last MEAP test.

Senior Jennifer Bushart wrote:

"This new experience opened up the reserved girl who was never willing to take a risk or try something new. I felt important and no longer afraid to try new things and speak out on what I thought was important. It made me discover that I could be the one to actually save a human's life."

Senior Gary Polenz wrote that the training from the program will stay with him for the rest of his life, and he now plans on becoming a fireman as a result of the experience.

TRAINING FOR the Teen SERT program requires 20 hours of learning how to react to an emergency situation. The kids were certified in cardiopulmonary resuscitation [CPR] and first aid, in addition to learning how to operate a defibrillator machine.

The teens were schooled in how to be prepared for disasters, fire safety (where part of the training required they put out an actual fire), disaster medical assistance, light search and rescue, terrorism, and disaster psychology.

"Parents were so impressed by the program that they asked if they could take the training as well," Soltis explained. Parents involved include Carla Bushart, Jodi Sell and Valerie Nickel.

As a final exam, team members were instructed to clear out the school's theater wing during a fire drill. When they arrived there was smoke filled hallways, and injured students strewn about the area. Unbeknownst to the Teen SERT team, these were drama students who were "acting" for the benefit of

the final exam. The drama department's fog machine supplied the smoke. According to all involved, the disaster was very real and they only learned after it was over that it was a "mock" disaster.

There is a future plan to form a Teen SERT group at the middle school. The high school Teen SERT members will help mentor the middle school students.

"I truly believe if it hadn't been for Leanna Soltis none of this would've happened," said Lawver. "She's the one that really got this project off the ground and rolling."

FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR'S DESK **BY GARY ZULINSKI**

Happy Holidays to All!

The FY06HSGP guidelines were recently released and Citizen Corps has an important role in fulfilling the National Preparedness Goal. The American citizens are the ultimate stakeholders in the homeland security mission and must be an integral component of national preparedness efforts. As such, the general public is included in the vision statement of the Goal, which notes that citizens must have:

- a clear understanding of national preparedness
- regular outreach and communication
- alerts, warnings, and crisis communication
- opportunities to be involved

The FY 2006 funds will be used to support Citizen Corps Councils with efforts to engage citizens in all-hazards prevention, protection, response, and recovery.

These efforts include planning and evaluation, public education and emergency communications, training, exercises, volunteer programs and activities to support emergency responders, surge capacity roles and responsibilities, and providing proper equipment to citizen volunteers.

20 million has been allocated for FY06 Citizen Corps funding and is based on population. I will know what

will be Michigan's portion once the state application is submitted to DHS and approved.

I don't expect much more than the \$377,000 that was allocated for FY05. So the state council and I will be looking to provide the best support once we know what Michigan Citizen Corps portion is.

Michigan Citizen Corps has become powerful in preparing Michigan Citizen for all-hazards protection. I am very pleased the way MCC has evolved and grown, and it is all due the hard work that all councils are accomplishing. CERT is the lead program and more than 95% of all the councils have active programs.

Oakland University is the first to offer college credit for CERT and I have many more colleges looking to do the same. A few councils are collaborating with their local colleges to be the training center for CERT.

Some of the 2006 goals for Michigan Citizen Corps I would like to see accomplished are continued collaboration with the Medical Reserve Corps units across the state to assist in surge capacity. Realign the council regions to match that of emergency management and Bio-terrorism districts. With regionalization coming I would like to see the regional governing boards also act in overseeing the Citizen Corps activities within the regions.

If 2006 is half as good as 2005 has been great things are going to happen for Michigan Citizen Corps!!

Michigan Citizen Corps now has 33 county and 24 local. Population Served by County/Local Citizen Corps Councils: 7,835,679 (79% of total state population)

ENHANCED AIRLINES SCREENING PROCEDURES ANNOUNCED

December 2, 2005 -- Airline travelers can expect to see more random screenings, fewer prohibited items and a Transportation Security Administration (TSA) workforce more dedicated to detecting and defeating more serious threats, such as explosives. These changes are part of an update to security procedures, which go into effect December 22, 2005 and announced today.

The specific changes include more additional screenings of passengers and their bags using a variety of methods selected at random. Passengers will also once again be able to carry small tools and scissors on-board aircraft. These changes will allow TSA to focus resources on more serious threats.

Visit:

<http://www.tsa.gov/public/display?theme=40&content=090005198018c349> for the entire story

LAW ENFORCEMENT UTILIZING CERT TO ADDRESS PREPAREDNESS GOALS

Over the past five years, catastrophic events have tested our nation's first responders and in many communities, stretched them to the limit. The terrorist attacks of 2001 and devastating natural disasters have demonstrated the importance of emergency preparedness for local and state emergency professionals and ordinary citizens. By providing citizens with the necessary training, skills, and equipment, communities can be better prepared to respond in the event of an emergency in their community.

History of CERT

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) concept was first developed and implemented by the Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD) in 1985. The training was created by LAFD to aid emergency personnel responding to wild fires and earthquakes. In partnership with the National Fire Academy, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) adopted the CERT training module and began promoting nationwide use of the CERT training in 1993. In cooperation with the LAFD, the CERT curriculum was expanded to apply to all hazards.

After the events of September 11, 2001, President Bush called upon all Americans to dedicate at least 4,000 hours over their lifetime in service to others through the USA Freedom Corps initiative. Citizen Corps, a component of USA Freedom Corps, was created to provide opportunities for individuals to assist their community in emergency preparation through volunteering. CERT became one of the five Citizen Corps partner programs in 2002, along with

Neighborhood Watch, Volunteers in Police Service, Medical Reserve Corps and Fire Corps. It is managed by the Department of Homeland Security. Today, there are more than 1,100 CERT teams in communities across the United States.

For more of the story

<http://www.policevolunteers.org/pdf/CERT.pdf>

(Must have PDF reader

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

WINTER DRIVING TIPS

Have your car(s) winterized before the winter storm season. Keeping your car(s) in good condition will decrease your chance of being stranded in cold weather. Have a mechanic check your battery, antifreeze, wipers and windshield washer fluid, ignition system, thermostat, lights, flashing hazard lights, exhaust system, heater, brakes, defroster, and oil level. If necessary, replace existing oil with a winter grade oil. Install good winter tires. Make sure the tires have adequate tread. All-weather radials are usually adequate for most winter conditions. However, some jurisdictions require that to drive on their roads, vehicles must be equipped with chains or snow tires with studs.

If you have a cell phone or two-way radio available for your use, keep the battery charged and keep it with you whenever traveling in winter weather. If you should become stranded, you will be able to call for help, advising rescuers of your location.

Keep a windshield scraper and small broom in your car for ice and snow removal. Put together a separate disaster supplies kit for the trunk of each car used by members of your household. You should also bring a thermos of warm broth if you are on the road during a winter storm. If you should become stranded during a winter storm, these items will make you more comfortable until the storm passes. The kit should include the following:

- Several blankets or sleeping bags.
- Rain gear and extra sets of dry clothing, mittens, socks, and a wool cap.
- Extra newspapers for insulation.
- Plastic bags for sanitation.
- Canned fruit, nuts, and high energy "munchies." Non-electric can opener if

- necessary.
- Several bottles of water. Eating snow will lower your body temperature. If necessary, melt it first.
- Cans of broth or soup.
- A small shovel, a pocket knife, and small tools, such as pliers, a wrench, and screwdriver.
- A small sack of sand for generating traction under wheels, a set of tire chains or traction mats.
- Jumper cables.
- A first aid kit and necessary medications.
- A flashlight with extra batteries.
- A candle in a metal can or other fireproof container. While candles are generally not recommended in disaster situations, having one in your car can be a source of heat and light if you are stranded.
- Matches.
- Cards, games, and puzzles.
- A brightly colored cloth to tie to the antenna.
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Keep your car's gas tank full for emergency use and to keep the fuel line from freezing.

Plan long trips carefully. Traveling during winter weather can be hazardous. Listen to the radio or call the state highway patrol for the latest road conditions. Plan to travel during daylight and, if possible, take at least one other person.

Let someone know your destination, your route, and when you expect to arrive. If your car gets stuck along the way, help can be sent along your predetermined route.

Be aware of sleet, freezing rain, freezing drizzle, and dense fog, which can make driving very hazardous. The leading cause of death during winter storms is from automobile or other transportation accidents. During winter weather conditions, multiple vehicle accidents are more likely to occur, resulting in injury and death. Avoid driving during sleet, freezing rain, freezing drizzle, and dense fog - these serious conditions are often underestimated.

If you do get stuck:

Stay with your vehicle. Do not leave the vehicle to search for assistance unless help is visible within 100 yards. Disorientation and confusion come very quickly in blowing snow. Avoid traveling during winter storms. If you must travel and do become stranded, it is better to stay in the vehicle and wait for help.

Display a trouble sign to indicate you need help. Hang a brightly colored cloth (preferably red) on the radio antenna and raise the hood (after snow stops falling).

Occasionally run engine to keep warm. Carbon monoxide can build up inside a standing vehicle while the engine is running, even if the exhaust pipe is clear. Experience has shown that running the heater for 10 minutes every hour is enough to keep occupants warm and will reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning and conserve fuel. Turn on the engine for about 10 minutes each hour (or 5 minutes every half hour). Use the heater while the engine is running. Keep the exhaust pipe clear of snow and slightly open a downwind window for ventilation.

Leave the overhead light on when the engine is running so that you can be seen. Do minor exercises to keep up circulation. Clap hands and move arms and legs occasionally. Try not to stay in one position for too long.

If more than one person is in the car, take turns sleeping. One of the first signs of hypothermia is sleepiness. If you are not awakened periodically to increase body temperature and circulation, you can freeze to death. **Huddle together for warmth.**

Use newspapers, maps, and even the removable car mats for added insulation. Layering items will help trap more body heat.

Keep a window that is away from the blowing wind slightly open to let in air. Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia. Severe cold can cause numbness, making you unaware of possible danger. Keep fingers and toes moving for circulation, huddle together, and drink warm broth to reduce risk of further injury.

Drink fluids to avoid dehydration. Bulky winter clothing can cause you to sweat, but cold dry air will help the sweat evaporate, making you unaware of possible dehydration. When individuals are dehydrated, they are more susceptible to the effects of cold and heart attacks. Melt snow before using it for drinking water. Eating snow lowers your body temperature, increasing risk from hypothermia.

Avoid overexertion. Cold weather puts an added strain on the heart. Unaccustomed exercise such as shoveling snow or pushing a car can bring on a heart attack or make other medical conditions worse.

RESOURCES:

CERT RESOURCE (Guide for programs)

http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/CERT/new_CERT/index.htm

Take The CERT CHALLENGE!

<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/CERT/certchallenge/instruction.htm>

CERT Resources

http://www.michigan.gov/mcsc/0,1607,7-137-6116_23782-103091--,00.html

CERT: FAQ

<http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/CERT/certfaq.asp>

Are You Ready?

www.ready.gov

FEMA Preparation and Prevention Virtual Library

<http://www.fema.gov/library/prepandprev.shtm>

Building A Disaster Resistant Neighborhood

<http://www.tallytown.com/redcross/drn.html>

CDC Emergency Training and Response

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/training>

American Red Cross Community Disaster Materials

<http://www.redcross.org/pubs/dspubs/cde.html>

CITIZEN CORPS

www.citizencorps.gov

CERT

<http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/CERT>

FIRE CORPS

www.firecorps.org

MRC

www.medicalreservecorps.gov

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

<http://www.usaonwatch.org>

VIPS

www.volunteersinpoliceservice.org

EMI Virtual Campus

<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/downloads/VCHowTo.pdf>

For more information about Michigan Citizen Corps, contact the Program Director, Gary Zulinski at (517) 241-3867 or zulinskiq@michigan.gov.

CITIZEN PREPAREDNESS

The American people are the ultimate stakeholders in the homeland security mission and must be an integral component of national preparedness efforts. Those in the emergency management community have a responsibility and obligation to educate the public on preparedness, provide emergency skills training, and provide opportunities for citizens to participate through volunteer service to support local first responders on an ongoing basis and during an event.

Think Nationally, Plan Regionally, Act Locally!